

*The Appearance of deceased Saints with their  
Lord, at his Coming, the Consolation of  
surviving Believers.*

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A  
S E R M O N

Occasioned by the

D E A T H

O F

Mr. EDWARD TOMKINS,

W H O

Departed this Life, March 9, 1753.

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By BENJAMIN WALLIN. \*

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— *I know that he shall rise again in the Resurrection,  
at the last Day.* John xi. 24.

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L O N D O N :

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461

W. Musgrave.



**TO**  
**Mrs. CATHARINE TOMKINS,**  
Relict of the **DECEASED,**

**To the other Relations,**

And to all

Who desired the Publication of the  
ensuing **DISCOURSE.**

*My dear Friends,*

**A**T your Request this  
plain Sermon appeareth  
in Publick. Whatever Re-  
ception it may meet with  
from any others, I trust that  
you will peruse it with Atten-  
tion and Candour, and also

A 2 follow

## DEDICATION.

follow it with your Prayers, that, under the Divine Blessing, it may be rendered extensively useful. With my earnest Wishes for your Improvement by the present mournful Dispensation, and for Grace to persevere unto eternal Life, I remain,

*Your affectionate Friend,*

*and obliged Servant,*

Porter's Buildings,  
Southwark, May  
8, 1753.



BENJAMIN WALLIN.



I THESS. IV. 14.

*For if we believe that Jesus died  
and rose again, even so them also  
which sleep in Jesus, will God  
bring with him.*

**A** Sudden and very afflictive Stroke directeth my Ministrations at this time, on which sorrowful Occasion I have chosen the words read, partly on account of the late frequent removal of those who have been eminently useful among us, but principally in consequence of some conversation with the Deceased: A conversation in which our departed friend gave me the strongest assurance of his earnest expectation and longing desire after the blessed hope contained in the text.

This providence, under which many of us mourn, though very distressing, is not more grievous than the passage before us is joyful: O may the Holy Spirit, under whose agency alone the most seasonable words become effectual, vouchsafe his blessed influence, that every sorrowful heart attending the present service, may go hence sustained with divine consolation.

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In

### *On the Death of*

Chap. I.

In consulting the sacred history, it appeareth that the gospel was preached very early, and wonderfully obtained against much opposition at *Thessalonica*, in consequence of which there was soon gathered a large church consisting of believers, famous for their zeal and activity; these disciples, whose faith we are told was spread abroad in every place, for their work of faith, their labour of love, and their patience of hope, were ensamples to all that believed. Amiable character indeed! An attainment worthy the pursuit every one who professeth to be a follower of Jesus. The same and increase of this flourishing community raised the envy of those who believed not, who being moved with indignation and wrath, and under the influence of the common adversary of Christ and his church, employed all their power and policy in troubling these saints: Their persecutions were very severe, even to the death of many, who were dear to the surviving brethren, as helpers of their faith and joy. Under these losses which it is more than probable, were attended with the departure of others, who were taken off in a natural way, sorrow filled the heart of these affectionate disciples. The sudden and untimely death of those with whom we have taken sweet and profitable communion, or of those who have been advanced to eminent station and great usefulness in the church

Mr. EDWARD TOMKINS.

church of God, and especially when these strokes are often repeated, I say these frequent stripping dispensations, whereby many useful persons are removed, are not a little grievous to the faithful who are left behind. Some think that this epistle was wrote in the early part of the apostles ministry, and it may be the very first that was sent by that inspired penman to any community; if so, the church at *Thessalonica* had been lately collected when she received this letter of consolation, and was under the afflicted circumstances therein represented; however, this is certain, that these disciples had not been long incorporated in a church state; and it is probable that many, if not most of them, were newly converted to the faith; it must therefore have been a sore tryal when enduring persecution from the enemies of the gospel, to be thus frequently forsaken, through death, of those whom they tenderly loved as fellow saints, fellow sufferers, and instruments of their comfort. No wonder that under these circumstances, they sorrowed much; but herein they were liable to, if not actually overtaken with excess. It is rare that the best in this imperfect state, either mourn or rejoice, but they exceed the bounds of moderation, and thereby, in some measure at least, blemish their profession. The sympathising apostle with



much compassion cautions these afflicted brethren, in the words of the text, and for their comfort, remindeth them of a certain and glorious truth, the contemplation of which may regulate our sorrow on the like mournful occasions, and render it becoming those who believe in Jesus.

In the verse immediately preceding, the apostle thus expresseth himself, *but I would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which are asleep.* I think it unreasonable to suppose, that these faints, however lately enlightened, were totally ignorant of the state of those who died in faith; they must surely look upon their brethren who had resisted unto blood striving against sin, and who were departed this life, after having endured through faith and patience, to be now, in their separate spirits, inheriting the promises; and it appeareth from many passages in this epistle, as we may hereafter see, that these *Thessalonians* were perfectly acquainted and much delighted with the glorious articles of the resurrection, and the revelation of Christ from heaven: By their not being ignorant, I therefore apprehend, the apostle intendeth that he would not have them unmindful or thoughtless of this thing; he seemeth in this phrase to be stirring up these disciples, by putting them in

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remembrance of this blessed hope, that they might consider the certainty and evidence thereof, for their comfort under their repeated losses: It is not unlikely but that these afflicted saints now looked on the dark side of things, an evil to which we are universally prone under afflictive dispensations of providence; their imbittered spirits, 'tis probable, dwelt in a manner wholly on their own desolate circumstances, through the removal of their dear friends, while they forgot to take into consideration the joyful expectation of their return from the pit of corruption, into the glorious liberty of the sons of God; hence they were very much dejected; now the apostle to moderate their sorrow, and raise their spirits, exhorteth these christians to consider the state of the faithful who were fallen asleep, that saith he, *ye sorrow not even as others which have no hope*, i. e. as unbelievers or strangers to this hope revealed in the gospel, or as persons without hope, respecting the eternal welfare and future happiness of their deceased friends and relatives, or as those who are unacquainted with, or that believe not the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. In order to quicken and establish them in relation to this great point, he proceedeth to observe in the passage more particularly to be considered. *For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again, even so*

*On the Death of*

*so them also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him.* In the words we may observe,

I. The supposition ; or what the apostle taketh for granted in this declaration.

II. The conclusion, or his assertion for the comfort of these sorrowful saints, and of all christians under the like grievous circumstances.

I. We have observable the apostle's supposition, which is contained in the following clause. *For if we believe that Jesus died, and rose again.* The death and resurrection of Jesus are essential articles of the christian's faith, and lay at the foundation of his hope, consolation and joy : In this expectation the faithful under the former dispensation, died, believing that they should enter into rest. To this *Moses* and the prophets gave witness from the beginning, and from them the risen Saviour reproved the unbelief of his disciples, and convinced them that he, the Messiah, ought to suffer and enter into his glory. The inspired penmen of the old testament plainly shew that the Messiah was to suffer and die, and that nevertheless he was not to see corruption, and consequently that he was soon to rise again. The same is more clearly held forth in the new testament, than

Luke 24.  
27.

Dan. 9.  
26.

Ps. 16. 10.

Matt. 12.  
40.

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thus the apostle, speaking of the doctrine which he preached. *I delivered unto you* <sup>1 Cor. 13.</sup> *first of all, that which I also received, how* <sup>3. 4.</sup> *that Christ died for our sins, according to the scriptures: and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day, according to the scriptures.* And then proceedeth to the witnesses of that grand and important fact, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead; and to this agreeth Paul's instruction to Timothy; *remember that Jesus Christ of the seed of* <sup>2 Tim. 2.</sup> *David, was raised from the dead, according* <sup>8.</sup> *to my gospel.* The death and resurrection of Christ are, therefore, fundamental points; on these as on two grand hinges, turns the door of the everlasting gospel: he that hesitates concerning either of these, can have no plausible pretence to the name of a christian, much less can such an one be thought to know any thing of that saving faith which is of the operation of God by the gospel, and which grounds the repenting sinner's hope on the atonement made by the blood of Christ, the reality and completeness of whose sacrifice is evinced in his resurrection from the dead; *for he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our justification.* That Jesus <sup>Rom. 4.</sup> *died, and thereby delivered his people from* <sup>25.</sup> *wrath to come, and thus obtained eternal redemption for them, these Thessalonians and all true christians firmly believed;* <sup>Chap. 1.</sup> *the* <sup>10.</sup>



2Thess. 2. the good hope through grace, which is given of the Father, and which is accompanied with everlasting consolation, is a hope raised under the regenerating influences of the Divine Spirit, in the certain prospect of the resurrection of Christ from the dead : The particle *if* in the text cannot therefore involve any degree of doubt concerning these great, these important facts, but is rather demonstrative, *q. d.* " seeing we, *i. e.* you " and myself, and all the faithful who are " born of the spirit, do believe ; are fully " persuaded of, and with undoubted confidence rest our hope on these glorious " truths, that Jesus the only Saviour, in " whom we trust, died for our sins, and " having thereby made satisfaction, burst " the bands of the grave, and rose from " the dead, *even so them also which sleep in " Jesus God will bring with him.* Thus the apostle taketh it for granted, as essentially included in the character of true believers, among whom he ranketh these *Thessalonians*, that they were well persuaded, and thoroughly established in these great points, namely, that Jesus died and rose again, which leads,

II. To consider the conclusion or assertion of the apostle to the matter in hand, which was plainly to regulate the sorrow of these mournful disciples, and to comfort them under their repeated losses, and this is laid up in the following words. *Even so them also*



also which sleep in Jesus, will God bring with him. There is something very familiar and instructive in the allusion of the Holy Ghost when speaking of the departed in this and many other passages, wherein they are represented as fallen asleep; this however is to be considered as having a sole reference to the body, that alone, being the subject of death or sleep. We cannot form adequate ideas of our own spirits, or fully comprehend that essential and noblest part of ourselves, but this we know, that the human soul is immaterial and spiritual, in which we bear the image of him that made us, and are distinguished from, and exalted above, the rest of the lower creation; this spiritual substance, if I may so call it, may pass under various changes and be in different states, but it is not divisible, or liable to a dissolution as the body, which is material and compounded. The soul is immortal and cannot properly speaking, be said to die; however, were it the pleasure of the Almighty, this Creature might possibly be annihilated, die it cannot. And as the soul of man is not capable of death, so neither of sleep, by which the body in that state is here represented; death and sleep are equally incompatible with the soul's spirituality: The notion of the soul's sleeping in the state of

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the dead is no less absurd, than inconsistent with many passages of scripture, which insure the believer of being present with his Lord when absent from the body.

But with respect to the outward man, those who have departed this life, may with great propriety be represented as sleeping: In sleep the external senses are bound, and the person lieth insensible and incapable of action, which agreeth with the state of the dead, who know nothing, neither can they do any thing, *for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave*, and as the sons of men awake and rise when the morning cometh so shall all who sleep in the dust, according to the different states in which they lie down, awake in the morning of the resurrection; and with regard to the saints, the advantages with which their bodies shall rise is another very similar and agreeable circumstance; for as men lie down after the toils of the day, weary and exhausted, and having slept, awake with their spirits and strength recruited; so shall the righteous come forth spiritual and glorious, their bodies being fashioned like their Saviours, and suited to the fruition of that everlasting day which they shall spend in their celestial mansions; but it is evident that the state of the dead, is thus represented in scripture without

Ecclef. 9.  
10.

Daniel 12.  
2.

Bhil. 3. 21.

out distinction, and therefore simply speaking this metaphor determines nothing in favour of the subject; the righteous and the wicked differ only in the last mentioned article: Otherwise the faint and the sinner lie down alike there being no apparent or real difference in their natural state, but departed believers, who are spoken of in the text, are distinguished by a peculiar and significant phrase, namely that of *sleeping in Jesus*. This is not to be understood of those who merely make a profession of the name of Christ, for our Lord hath shewn us, that ignorant and formal professors, whom he describeth under the character of *foolish Virgins*, who have no Oil in their vessels with their lamps, shall find, that <sup>Matt. 25.</sup> when the bridegroom cometh, the door will be shut against them. Nor is this phrase of sleeping in Jesus to be confined to those who have surrendered their natural lives for the testimony of the gospel; martyrs who through faith have endured, being slain with the sword, or otherwise put to death for Christ's sake, as some of these *Thessalonians* were, are doubtless included, and on them, when they appear with Jesus, will be revealed a glory, with which their bloody sufferings are not worthy to be <sup>Rom. 8.</sup> compared. But what is here declared is the <sup>18.</sup> common privilege of all true believers, and will



Chap. 5.  
13.

will be the happy lot of every disciple of the Redeemer. It is expressly said that the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ will be *with all his saints*. By sleeping in Jesus, therefore, must be understood dying in the faith of him, or trusting in him for eternal salvation.

Now concerning those who sleep in Jesus, it is asserted that God will bring them with him, i. e. at his appearance agreeable to what is recorded in the 16th verse, *For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the arch angel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first.* This appearance and revelation of Christ is clearly set forth in the sacred writings, especially those of the new testament, and of which the *Thessalonians* were in earnest expectation; their first conversion is thus described, namely, that *they turned from idols to serve the living God, and to wait for his Son from heaven.* And the zeal discovered by these brethren for the second coming of Jesus, gave occasion to some ignorant or designing persons to trouble them with a notion that it would happen in their time, against which vain insinuation the apostle exhorteth them, saying, *be not soon shaken in mind or be troubled neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day*



*day of Christ is at hand, let no man deceive you &c.* To the same ardent affection<sup>2 Thes. 2.</sup>

of these believers for this glorious appearance the apostle also seemeth to refer, when he thus prayeth for them, *and the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God,*<sup>2 Thes. 3.</sup> *and into the patient waiting for Christ.*<sup>5.</sup>

An extraordinary petition; which while it denoteth some degree of impatience in these disciples also reproveth them whose thoughts and affections are seldom employed about this blessed hope; but the faithful are assured that as Christ *once in the end of the world hath appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.* So unto them that look for him, *shall he appear the second time, without sin unto salvation.* Heb. 9. 26.

And it is declared in our text, that when the Lord cometh, them that sleep in him, God will bring with him: Some say God the Father is intended, I rather think with those who understand it of Jesus himself, for he hath this charge from the Father to raise up all which he hath given him, and hath engaged to accomplish the same; to him therefore believers commit the keeping of their bodies till the last day; and<sup>John 6. 39.</sup>

further it is observable, that the resurrection of Christ, which is sometimes ascribed to one and sometimes to another of the Sacred Three, is here, as in some other places, spoken of as his own act; it is not said

- said that he *was raised*, but that he *rose* again, for these reasons I apprehend that the Divine Person spoken of in the text is no other than Christ himself, who is *over all*
- Rom. 1. 5. *God blessed for ever*, and whose proper Deity shines throughout revelation, though some presume to contradict this essential and most glorious branch of the mediator's wonderful person. However this is certain, that it is the Lord Jesus who is to descend, and when he cometh, the apostle asserteth that, they who sleep in him shall be brought with him; they, *i. e.* their whole persons, and more particularly referring to their bodies which now dwell in the dust, but shall then awake, and come forth from their graves, by his power, *who is able even to subdue all things to himself. Even so also* *i. e.* in like manner, and as certainly, or upon this foundation, you may assure yourselves, that those who *sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*
- Phil. 3. 21.

The substance of the passage is this, that all true believers, as they are well persuaded that Jesus their Saviour died and rose again, may with the highest confidence assure themselves also, that those who die in the faith of Christ shall be ransomed from the grave, and at the coming of their Lord, make their appearance with him; a consideration which may reasonably alleviate our sorrow

sorrow, and comfort our hearts when mourning on account of those who are fallen asleep.

To a farther improvement on this comfortable declaration let us briefly consider.

I. How it appeareth that they who believe that Jesus died and rose again may on the same foundation, and with equal certainty, assure themselves that them who sleep in Jesus, shall be brought with him.

II. What is included in this blessed assurance for our comfort under the loss of christian friends.

I How doth it appear that those who believe the resurrection of Jesus from the dead may assure themselves that his disciples shall be brought wth him at his second coming? And this appeareth,

1. From the testimony of sacred writ. By the word of the Lord we know and are persuaded that Jesus died and rose again, and by the same word we also know, that those who sleep in Jesus shall be brought with him; the one is as certainly and clearly attested in holy scripture as the other: They are equally confirmed in the infallible word of truth, and therefore he that is persuaded of the former may



may also be assured of the latter. Not only the death, resurrection and second coming of Christ, but also the return of his saints from their graves, and their appearance with him, is the subject of divine prophecy. That the faithful who sleep in the dust, shall rise\* as their saviour's *dead body*, and *awake and sing*, was not unknown to the saints of old, but it is more fully revealed in the new testament. *Knowing* saith the apostle, *that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise up us also by Jesus, and shall present us with you.* All Exhortations to holiness and spirituality, and there is nothing more purifying than this hope, I say, every exhortation to the saints to demean themselves worthy the expectation

2. Cor. 4.  
14.

1 John 3.  
3.

\* *Isaiah 26. 19* The *Jews* refer this prophecy to the resurrection of the dead, and several expositors have rendered the words as above, nor is it uncommon for the particle *as* to be understood, the supplying of which seemeth most agreeable in this place, and it denoteth the certainty and likeness of the saints resurrection with that of their Lord's, for doubtless Christ's resurrection is the pattern and pledge of ours, as we shall presently have occasion to observe. See Dr. *Gill's* discourse on the resurrection. *Lime-street Sermons* Vol. II. pag. 404. Also *Pool's* annotations on the above passage. Many other places in old testament shew, that believers under that dispensation were acquainted with and rejoiced in this blessed hope. See *Job 19. 27.* *Pf. 17. 5. 49. 15.* *Dan. 12. 2. 13.* *Hosea 13. 4.* *Exod. 3. 16.* compared with *Mat. 22. 32.* *Heb. 11. 35.*



tation of Christ's second coming, involves this assurance, that they shall appear with him. *Our conversation is in heaven, from* <sup>Phil. 3. 20.</sup> *whence also we look for the saviour the Lord Jesus Christ. And now, little Children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we* <sup>1 John 2. 28.</sup> *may have confidence and not be ashamed before him at his coming.* <sup>1 John 3. 2.</sup> *Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: But we know that when he shall appear, we, i. e. we who are called the sons of God, shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is. The appearance of the redeemed with their Lord is expressly declared by the apostle to the Colossians; when Christ who is our Life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.* <sup>Colof. 3. 4.</sup> *We have already seen, that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ will be with* <sup>Chap. 3. 13.</sup> *all his saints; and in the beginning of the next epistle, it is expressly asserted, that when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven, he shall come to be glorified in his saints and admired in all them that believe.* <sup>2 Thes. 1. 7. and 10. compar'd.</sup> *Not one of the Saints shall then be missing. Thus the scriptures, which cannot be broken, are full of this glorious and comfortable truth of the saints appearing with their Lord at his coming, and therefore if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, we must also believe that them who sleep in Jesus shall be brought with him.*

2. This will also appear if we consider, that in the resurrection of Jesus we have an instance, and consequently a proof of the resurrection of the dead ; so that being well persuaded of the former, we have no rational ground of scruple respecting the latter. and therefore, if we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, we have the highest reason to conclude that his people shall be raised and come with him, according to the divine promise. The resurrection of the body, which is essentially necessary to the faithful appearing in their whole persons with their Lord in the great day, is very difficult, and seemingly impossible to an eye of sense ; it has therefore been scrupled and denied by many, nor is it wonderful that those who never enjoyed, or that those who have been left to despise revelation, should stumble at a truth which is not discoverable by the light of nature : We are wholly indebted to the word of God for this great and comfortable assurance, but it being revealed the divine perfections and providence witness to the perverseness of them who reject it. Our Lord and his apostles, when treating on this subject, shew, that every returning harvest

John 12. affordeth a similar and no less incompre-  
 24. hensible appearance. Each naked grain of corn that being sown, lieth buried in the earth, and there corrupteth and dieth, yet afterwards being revived, riseth and appeareth with

with a lovely and fruitful body, is a sufficient reply to the cavilling unbeliever that presumeth to contradict a fact plainly revealed, because his narrow understanding cannot comprehend the amazing production. *Thou fool, saith Paul, that which* 1 Cor. 15.  
*thou sowest is not quickened except it die.* <sup>36.</sup>

It is very bold to hesitate the accomplishment of what God hath promised, because we are under a difficulty in conceiving how it can be brought to pass; and it is no less irrational. *Why should it be thought a thing* Acts 26.  
*incredible with you that God should raise the*  
*dead?* The body, indeed, seeth corruption,

and returneth to its earth: However, tho' Pf. 146. 4.  
 it passeth under a dissolution, it is not annihilated, and shall vain man presume to contradict the word of the infinite Jehovah in pronouncing it impossible for the dead to rise? But if in any instance the dead hath been raised, the dispute is at an end; there can then be no longer any difficulty about the saints coming with Christ, on account of the resurrection of their bodies, which we have seen included in this blessed hope; now this is undeniably evident to them who are persuaded that Jesus died and rose again, for as the apostle observeth, *if there be no* 1 Cor. 15.  
*resurrection of the dead then is Christ not* <sup>13.</sup>  
*risen.* In the resurrection of Christ the faithful have an unexceptionable proof that the dead rise, and thereby a ground for the



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expectation of the Lord's appearance with his saints. So then, he who believeth that Jesus rose from the dead, may upon the same foundation, and for this reason among others, assure himself that them which sleep in Jesus God will bring with him.

3. This comfortable conclusion of the apostle may be further illustrated and confirmed, from the consideration of the character under which Jesus died, and the end for which he rose from the dead. The scriptures not only shew that Jesus died and rose again, but also that he passed under these changes in a public capacity, and that he suffered as the Head and Surety of his people; they shew us that Christ died to the end that his chosen might live, and that being redeemed from all the miserable effects of sin, they might, in due time, be advanced to immortality and eternal life; thus it is declared, *that he was delivered for our offences, and was raised again for our Justification.* Jesus died that through death he might deliver his people who were under the power and fear of it through sin; he died to ransom them *from the Grave*, and that they *might live together with him.* The resurrection of Christ was not only an evidence of his People's Justification through his blood, but also an ensample and pledge of their rising to everlasting life. There subsisteth an indissoluble union and an everlasting

Rom. 4.

25.

Heb. 2. 15

Hosea 13.

14.

1 Thes. 5.

10.

lasting relation between Christ and his chosen ; They are one body of which he is the head, and his redeemed are the members ; in consequence of this union there is a necessary connection between his having thus died and rose again and their coming with him ; and for this reason, I apprehend, the apostle joineth his being the *Head of the body the church*, with his being the *first born from the dead*. Now this union between Jesus and his people com-  
 prehendeth their whole persons ; the body as well as the soul of the believer is given to Christ, it is the purchase of his blood, and being sanctified, the temple of his Spirit, as appeareth from the exhortation to the *Corinthians*, *What know ye not that your bodies are the temple of the Holy Ghost ? ye are bought with a price, therefore glorify God in your body and your spirit, which are God's*. Death cannot dissolve this union, the fruit of the everlasting love of God ; it was the free and unchangeable love of the eternal Son that moved him to give himself that he might redeem us from all iniquity : He hath made his soul an offering for sin and tasted death, as the Substitute and Surety of his people, and having hereby obtained eternal redemption for them, he revived and rose, that they might live and reign with him for ever ; and shall any thing separate from this love,  
 or

Colos. 1.

18.

John 6.

39.

1 Cor. 6.

20.

Eph. 5. 2.

Rom. 8. or detain the happy subjects from enjoying  
 35. 38. the fruit of their Saviour's blood? Surely  
 compared. not.

Jesus dying in this public character,  
 and for these glorious ends, is styled, as be-  
 fore mentioned, the *first begotten from the*  
*dead*, and also the *first fruits of them that*  
 Colof. 1. *sleep*. To shew that the seed of the cove-

nant shall undoubtedly be gathered to him  
 18. in due time. Was it impossible that Jesus,  
 1 Cor. 15. the head, should be held by the bands of  
 20. death, when the time for his returning from  
 the grave was fulfilled? It will likewise be  
 impossible for death to detain believers, the  
 members, when the hour is come, and the  
 trump of God shall sound; these chosen  
 vessels must, and shall be delivered up in the  
 morning of the resurrection. If Jesus thus  
 died and rose again, there is no reason to  
 doubt, but that all the gracious design of  
 his so doing will be fully accomplished, and  
 this was among other things that his peo-  
 ple being justified, and delivered from the  
 power of the second death, might appear  
 with him, when he cometh from heaven,  
 and therefore seeing we believe that Jesus  
 rose from the dead, we may be assured  
 that his saints shall also make their appear-  
 ance with him. Again,

4. This assertion will be still more con-  
 spicuous, when we add the following  
 consideration, namely, that the presence  
 of all the redeemed will be absolutely  
 necessary



necessary to compleat the glory of Christ's  
 appearance. If Jesus by his death gave sa-  
 tisfaction, of which his rising again is an un-  
 deniable proof, then the glory consequent  
 on his being thus made perfect through suf-  
 ferings must needs follow; one branch of  
 which is his revelation from heaven with all  
 his saints; the glory with which the Lord  
 shall descend will be manifold; the Son of <sup>1 Thes. 3.</sup>  
 Man will come in his Father's glory, in his <sup>13.</sup>  
 own glory, and in the glory of his angels;  
 the lustre of either of these, and much more  
 their united splendour, exceedeth our con-  
 ception; but this is not all the glory in  
 which Jesus will shine when he appeareth,  
 for we have seen that he is also to be *glo-*  
*rified in his saints and admired in all them*  
*that believe.* If the glory of the Redeemer <sup>2 Thes. 1.</sup>  
 on his second coming, is to arise in any de- <sup>10.</sup>  
 gree from the attendance of his saints, their  
 absence, yea the absence of the least of these,  
 would render that glory incompleat; they  
 are stiled his jewels, as such they are to a-  
 dorn the Mediator when he descends to  
 judgment, and correspondent with this me-  
 taphor, Jesus is said to *make them up*; every  
 jewel shall be collected to compleat the <sup>Mal. 3. 17.</sup>  
 lustre of his appearance. When Jesus com-  
 eth, he is to appear as an able Saviour, and  
 one that hath finished the work of redemp-  
 tion and gathered in all the elect, but this  
 could not be if any vessel of mercy was  
 wanting,

wanting, he could not then appear to have fully overcome sin and satan, death and hell, or to have fulfilled his engagements with the Father; his power, or his faithfulness would lay under suspicion without the presence of those committed to his charge; yea, a schism in his mystical body would necessarily arise from the absence of one constituent member, and how then could the appearance of the Mediator be perfectly glorious? But blessed be God, we know, by the resurrection of Christ from the dead, that he hath obtained a victory over death, and completed the redemption of his people, the manifestation of which will be necessary to his glory when he descendeth from heaven, but to this end the redeemed must appear with him, and therefore if we believe that Jesus rose from the dead, having finished his work, we may be assured that his saints who sleep in him shall be brought with him, for otherwise the glory of his appearance, which is one part of the reward of his sufferings, would be deficient. We see then, that the apostle's conclusion is abundantly confirmed by divine prophecy, and by the proof we have in the resurrection of Christ, that the dead rise; it is likewise evident from the character under which Jesus suffered, and the ends for which he died and rose again, and also from the necessity of his saints appearing with him to com-

compleat the glory of his second coming. And what better security can be desired? The assertion being illustrated and confirmed, I proceed to enquire,

II. What is included in this blessed assurance for our comfort under the loss of christian friends? And,

I. This truth may comfort us when we consider that hence it appeareth, that our departed friends who die in the Lord; are safe: They are not lost. *If Christ had not rose again, then they also which are fallen asleep in Christ are perished.* But seeing Jesus rose from the dead, we know that they who sleep in him are safe with him. The scriptures shew that believers when absent from the body, are present with the Lord, and behold their father's face in righteousness. The souls of the just made perfect are safe in the temple of their God, and unite with holy angels in praising him and the Lamb; and their flesh also resteth in hope, being under the care of the great Shepherd who ever watcheth that which is the price of his own blood: It is true, their dust is scattered in common with the rest of the dead, and may be mingled with the wicked in the earth, but their omniscient and mighty Saviour will ransom it from the power of the grave, and each particle, es-

1 Cor. 15

18.

2 Cor. 5. 6.

Ps. 17. 15.

Rev. 5. 11

Hosea 23.

14.

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sential



essential to the purchased possession, shall be  
 John 6. 39, collected, for *of all that the Father hath gi-*  
 40. *ven him, Christ will lose nothing* : We have  
 already seen, that as his dead body, so shall  
 Isa. 26. 19 the bodies of his saints arise, when his  
 power, as the dew, cometh upon them.  
 Jesus will demand his chosen dead, and at  
 Rev. 20. his awful voice the depths shall open, and  
 13. they that sleep in him shall hear, shall a-  
 wake, and shall come forth to everlasting  
 John 5. life. It followeth,  
 28. 29.

2. That we shall again enjoy the fellow-  
 ship of our late friends who are dead in  
 Christ, which is a further consideration for  
 our comfort while we mourn their de-  
 parture. Death maketh not a final sepa-  
 ration of the saints, for they shall hereafter  
 meet in their Father's house. To the pre-  
 sent world, indeed, these our deceased re-  
 lations shall never return, so that our eyes  
 shall no more behold them in this mortal  
 state, but through faith we understand, and  
 know that we shall see them in the world  
 to come ; for our text assureth us that God  
 will bring them with him, and therefore  
 surviving believers may look after their de-  
 parted brethren with a certain expectation  
 of meeting them again. If we are followers  
 of those who through faith and patience in-  
 herit the promises, we shall surely find  
 them when we enter Jerusalem, which is  
 above ; and in the morning of the resur-  
 rection

rection the faithful will mutually rejoice at Col. 3. 4. the prospect of one another, when each saint in his spiritual body, shall appear with Christ in glory. And,

3. The great advantage with which the faithful shall meet hereafter, is another consideration for their comfort, when their friends are removed. Whether we consider believers in a separate state, or at the time referred to in the text, our meeting them in the world to come will be attended with great advantage, and particularly on the two following accounts.

In the first place, there, we shall find one another in a state of perfection, and hence the entertainment that will result from our communion together will be compleat. Now, indeed, in this world, the fellowship of the saints hath its peculiar delights and advantages, yet, alas! the faithful themselves while here, through weakness, sin and temptation, are often the occasion of grief to each other. In the present life, it is not uncommon to *endure* more than we *enjoy* from the best of companions, at least our pleasure is greatly abated, and we are liable to suffer much through the infirmities and afflictions, even of the most valuable relations on earth; but hereafter, in the world to come, the redeemed are set at an eternal distance from every occasion of sorrow, and are made perfect in holiness, so that nothing can arise

*On the Death of*

from any of them in that state, to interrupt their mutual satisfaction and joy. Again,

The meeting of the faithful in the future world will also be attended with this further advantage, namely, that there they shall remain *eternally* together: They meet never to part again. We may say of our deceased fellow christians, in allusion to what *Paul* saith to *Philemon* concerning *Onesimus*, that they are *departed for a season*, but we shall *receive them for ever*. Death is unknown in the heavenly country which believers seek; it is the land of the living, and when the saints are assembled in that state they shall be no more separated for ever; thus the temporary separation of the faithful, by natural death, is amply made up in their everlasting enjoyment of each other in the world to come. That the saints shall eternally abide together in glory is plainly included in what the apostle declareth, verse 17 below the text, namely, *so shall we ever be with the Lord*. This is spoken of believers without exception: If each believer shall ever be with the Lord, it followeth that believers in the same state shall ever be with one another, so that there is no danger of their being separated when once they have attained the presence of their God in heaven. *In his presence is fulness of joy, at his right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* One occasion of delight among the saints

Philem. 15

Rev. 21. 7.

Ps. 16. 11.



in heaven ariseth from their communion together, and all the pleasures of that state are everlasting.

Seeing then, that it is certain, that those who sleep in Jesus shall be brought with him, we know that our friends who are fallen asleep in him are safe, and that we shall meet them again, in a state of perfection, when we shall part no more, but shall dwell together for ever with the Lord: Have we not then, the highest reason, when mourning the loss of our faithful companions, *to comfort one another with these words?* Verse 18.

Thus we have considered the conclusiveness of the apostle's argument, and the certainty of that hope revealed in the text, and also the consolation which ariseth therefrom to those who sorrow after them that are asleep. And hence we learn,

1. The great advantage of enjoying a full and clear revelation of the truth contained in the text. We have seen that under the former dispensation believers were not without the knowledge of their appearance with Christ at his coming, yet this was to them but sparingly revealed; and compared with us who live in the gospel day, it may be said that they were ignorant concerning them which are asleep, but this blessed hope is most clearly manifested since the appearing of our Saviour, *who hath abolished death,* <sup>2 Tim. 1.</sup> and <sup>10.</sup>

*On the Death of*

*and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.* We are, while in the present state, liable to repeated sorrow through the death of our dear relations and acquaintance, and since the prospect of their coming with Christ yieldeth so much consolation under these losses, is it not a peculiar advantage to enjoy the brightest discovery of this glorious assurance? Now this advantage we have under the christian dispensation, a privilege for which we ought to be very thankful, and which among other things, should induce us to a quiet and humble resignation to the will of God when we are deprived of the choicest friends.

2. We also learn the necessity of an interest in Christ, in order to comfort in a dying hour. *Blessed are the dead, which die in the Lord.* There can be no comfort in the death of a relation without hope of his interest in Christ, for that revelation which alone bringeth tidings of redemption, by the Son of God, telleth us, that there is salvation in no other, and that *there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved.* Them, and them only, which *sleep in Jesus*, will God bring with him. But happy are those companions and partners in life who are also heirs together of the grace of God; for though they are separated for a season, they shall soon
- Rev. 14.  
13.
- Acts 4.12.

soon meet again in heaven, and renew their fellowship in everlasting habitations; this happiness have all the saints, and hence by the way, their communion is peculiarly excellent; for however hypocrites may creep into the visible church, it is the singular advantage of this spiritual fellowship to have a good hope concerning those, who, after having kept the faith, are removed from it by death: Now this is not to be main ained of any civil society, considered as such, since the grace of God is not requisite to constitute a person a member of such a society. How preferable then, is the communion of saints to any other communion on earth, the members of which have solid ground of comfort, yea and of joy in the death of their fellows.

And should not this influence our choice of companions in civil life? It is surely most desirable to have this hope concerning every one with whom we stand connected in the present world. Exceptions, indeed, are for the most part unavoidable, but seeing it is so conducive to our comfort that our departed friends die in Jesus, who cannot see the propriety of making some good evidence of true faith in a person a condition of our entering into any near relation with him? Is it not reasonable that this consideration should make us careful that, as much as in us lieth, we set our affections upon and  
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contract an alliance with those who have tasted that the Lord is gracious? And more especially should we be careful of this in the choice of the *nearest relative*: No secular advantage, which may engage to this strict and important union in life, will ballance the grief of beholding the just object of our tenderest affection, launching into the eternal world without hope of an interest in the only Redeemer; but to this tryal every christian, who joineth himself to an unbeliever, is liable from the moment the relation taketh place. Too many in these days, being led aside with divers lusts, neglect this concern when they chuse their companions for life, and thereby fall into temptations while they live together, and at length, being the survivor, they are plunged into sorrows. On the one hand, what anguish have I seen on the death of a person, lovely in nature, of whom the surviving relative hath obtained no satisfaction, that he slept in Jesus! The distress arising from such a separation hath, in some instances, exceeded the power of language to describe. On the other hand, the satisfaction and pleasure that hath attended believers on their beholding each other in Christ, at this season, though a season the most cruciating to nature, hath been no less inexpressible. They who are comfortably persuaded from divine revelation, and the witness of the Spirit, of their mutual

mutual interest in the covenant of life, mingle their tears with joy in the prospect of parting by death. Being united in Christ, the faithful can rejoice, even in this hour of tribulation, knowing that however natural relation is dissolved, and the ties of flesh are broken asunder, they shall soon assemble again with their Saviour, who rose from the dead. It is very affecting and no less delightful to observe parting christians, in the midst of their natural sorrows, glorying in the near views of eternity, that *neither death* Rom. 8. *nor life — nor any other creature shall be able* 38. 39. *to separate them from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus their Lord.*

May this teach us to esteem our believing friends. The grace of God doth not always render a person a suitable partner in civil life, but true faith which is more precious than gold which perisheth, doubleth the value of natural relations, for this reason among others, that it provideth for our comfort when they are separated from us by death; such relatives are therefore much to be desired! And is it not a distinguishing favour in providence to be blest with companions from among these excellent of the earth, who leave matter of consolation to their surviving friends, when they fall among those who sleep in Jesus? But,

3. Let us not be ignorant, Brethren, concerning those we lament, who died in faith,

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but

but comfort each other with the prospect given us of them in the text, and other parts of holy scripture : Not to be sorrowful when pious and useful Men are removed one upon another would argue a senseless and unworthy frame ; but while we reflect with grief on these our repeated losses, and mourn for ourselves, let us consider their happy situation, and look forward to this blessed hope, and glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ, when all his saints shall make an appearance with him ; and may the consideration of what we have now heard sustain us under the present afflicting Providence, whereby we are deprived of one, of whom, in general, I may venture to say, that he came not a whit behind any, according to his capacity, which was none of the least, for usefulness in his day ; but concerning our deceased brother, I shall take leave to subjoin the following particulars, and close with a few words of advice to his mournful survivors.

Our departed friend was afflicted from his cradle, yet he was enabled to execute a station not a little laborious, and by the favour of Providence he appeared in the world with advantage to himself and others: It was his lot to live more than fifty years under different characters, as it were on the same spot, his civil conduct therefore is well known, in respect of which I shall only say, that



that I apprehend, it will be universally allowed that this was no discredit to his religious profession.

He was awakened to a concern about his eternal state, at a time of life when, in all appearance, too many are thinking of nothing but how to gratify youthful lusts which war against the soul, and having obtained a good hope through grace, he became obedient to the ordinances of the gospel, and took up his fellowship with this church. It stands recorded that he made this publick profession in *Nov. 1722*, being baptized with three other persons, then also young men, and of whom I have the pleasure to say, that through distinguishing goodness, they all continue to this day in the same communion.

I hope it will give no offence that, upon this occasion, I call to mind the cordial affection which subsisted between the deceased and my late honoured Father, of precious memory to some present: Among other tokens of their friendship, I cannot forget, on the one hand the pleasure with which my dear Parent beheld him attend his dying bed, and on the other hand with what sympathy our late brother waited his expiring moment to testify the respect of a \*near relation in closing of his eyes ; an of-

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face

• It was the custom of the nearest relations to close the eyes of the deceased; this God promised *Jacob*, saying, *and Joseph shall put his hand upon thine eyes*, Gen. lxi. 4.

office for which there was neither opportunity nor necessity of performing on his breathless corps : But how pleasant is it to behold a minister and his people thus attached to each other in the bands of christian love ! Would to God that this mutual respect among believers of every rank was more universal.

Our late companion was helped to maintain his character among us full thirty years, with constancy, zeal, and extensive usefulness : I forbear mentioning some singular periods in which he was remarkably active for the publick good, and pass on in observing, that about eighteen years since he was called to the office of a deacon. I need only say, that by his death, this church hath lost a good officer : Are not the members of this community witnesses of his acting in the honourable station like one who accounted himself a servant of Jesus Christ, and who esteemed it a favour to be employed in his house ?

Fits of pain often seized our friend for a long time before he finished his course, but about six years ago he appeared to be the subject of a formidable distemper, which attacked him with great violence ; his condition under the pressure of this disorder is most aptly resembled in the description of *Job* ch. vii. for he was made to possess months of vanity, and wearisome nights were

were appointed to him ; and his end was answerable to *Job's*, though contrary to his own expectation, for when he slept in the dust, he was sought for in the morning ;— but was not.

During this tedious and cruciating passage through the valley of the shadow of death, he was greatly supported by many promises which had been the guide of his youth. The acuteness and length of his pains would sometimes occasion him to wish for a removal, and we that beheld his grief, especially when his disorder was raging, must allow, that any one would naturally chuse death, rather than *his* life. I have often heard him cry out through anguish of Spirit, but never understood, that even in his greatest agonies he uttered any thing unworthy the character of a christian : Indeed, he frequently complained in the bitterness of his soul ; but it was of himself, that he was so impatient ; and yet, I presume, that those who had the fairest opportunity for judging, will admit me impartial when I say, that all circumstances considered, his patience was admirable.

He might justly be compared to a vessel driven with winds and waves in an imperious storm ; now she mounteth up to heaven, then she goeth down into the depths, or dasheth against the unrelenting rocks ; thus was our friend tossed to and fro ; yet his anchor



chor held: His hope was fixed, trusting in the Lord. He frequently expressed to me, his humble confidence in a life hid with Christ in God; and would say, that in the midst of his bitterness he sometimes found a sweet delight in the expectation of sitting down with *Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob*, in the kingdom of God; this, with a believing prospect of his attending the Redeemer at his coming, yielded him great pleasure; hence with a peculiar satisfaction would he appropriate the words of the apostle, saying, when Christ who is *my* life shall appear, then shall *I* also appear with him in glory.

However, he was subject to one slavish fear, which often beset him, being anxious after the manner in which he should go through the pains of death; as he met with fore conflicts in the way, he was sometimes possessed with fearful apprehensions of being dismayed in the end: The swellings of *Jordan* excited terror, for he concluded that his departure would be as the passing that rapid river, when her waters rose to the highest pitch and overflowed her banks; he would accordingly often declare that indeed, through rich grace, he had nothing to fear beyond the grave; but he was afraid lest nature, being overcome by the sorrows that would encompass her in his dying hour, should occasion any thing dishonourable to his God or to his holy profession; and for  
this

this reason he accounted himself among those who through fear of death were all their life time subject to bondage. Behold the subtlety of the Tempter, taking occasion from the infirmities of the faithful, to betray them into a distrust of their God, in the prospect of trials, under a specious pretence of concern for his honour. But the event, as before hinted, proved otherwise; for after as chearful a day as he had enjoyed for years, though not without an uneasy night, he went off suddenly; and from the composure in which his countenance was found, he seemed to have a quick and easy transition into the unseen state, and we have no reason to hesitate his being in the joyful possession of the eternal inheritance. How little judgment can we form, by any previous circumstances, of the precise manner in which the final stroke shall be given! And we have as little reason to indulge any perplexing thoughts about it.

Now our brother is fallen asleep, let us be comforted, seeing we are well persuaded of his sleeping in Jesus, and knowing that he will appear among them whom God will bring with him. May you, Madam, the mournful relict of this dear man, be enabled to look after him with pleasure, thro' the heavenly glass before us, and may the prospect be always attended with a divine testimony to your own interest in the same Jesus; then  
will

will each returning thought of this your late husband, who is now entered into his rest, prove an occasion of your rejoicing in hope of the glory of God: This experience granted, you will have reason to say, that death is yours.

To the surviving offspring of him that is gone, what shall I say? You have lost the instrument of your being, and the principal guide of your youth, at a time when in all appearance you are opening to a wide world full of snares and sorrow; may the Lord protect you! On this solemn occasion I take leave in faithfulness to advise you, and assure yourself, that it is with a tender concern for your true happiness, that I earnestly beseech you to consider the God of your Father, and to make the divine testimonies your counsellors, by which alone you can escape the paths of the Destroyer; and may it appear to be the will of God, that while you bear his name, and possess his temporal estate, you may also be an heir of the same grace with your departed relative.

It is a pleasure to see so many of the numerous family of the Deceased walking in the same faith: May you, my friends, obtain mercy to be fruitful and steadfast to the end; but are any of you contenting yourselves short of the hope set before us in the text; O may such, and all here present under the like unhappy circumstances, be awakened



kened to consider their infelicity and danger. It is the peculiar privilege of believers to appear with Christ at his coming. Them who sleep *not* in Jesus, God will *not* bring with him; and their lot will be dreadful who have no place in that glorious retinue: Such, indeed, at the summons of the almighty Judge will awake, and rise out of their graves; but, alas, it will be *to shame* <sup>Daniel 12.</sup> *and everlasting contempt.*

To conclude; may each member of this church, by the present, and such like strokes, which of late have been frequently repeated, be excited to activity in his station, that his course may also be finished with usefulness and honour. And, in one word, may the very sudden manner in which our late brother was taken off, put us all upon our watch: This affecting providence is another instance of the great uncertainty of our continuance here; therefore let the exhortation of our Lord take place, *Be ye also ready; for in such an hour as you think not, the Son* <sup>Matt. 25.</sup> *of Man cometh.*

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